

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SCI-06 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-03 ACDA-19 L-03 FEAE-00 EUR-25 DRC-01 /147 W

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R 231245Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3443

INFO AEC GERMANTOWN

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 12686

VIENNA FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, PFOR, IN

SUBJ: VISIT TO BHABA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER (BARC)

1. IN FIVE-HOUR RED-CARPET TREATMENT AT BARC INVOLVING PRACTICALLY FULL TIME OF HEADS OF CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, BIO-MEDICINE, ENGINEERING (RADIOACTIVE WASTE AND DESALINATION), AND CONTROLLER DEPARTMENTS, SCIATT (DEFINITELY NO NUCLEAR EXPERT) GAINED FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS:

2. INDIANS ANXIOUS FOR RENEWED INTERCHANGE WITH USA; FOR INSTANCE, NOLTEM SALT REACTOR DEVELOPMENT, GOI CONTRACT PROCESSING OF BOILING WATER REACTOR FUEL FOR US, ETC. SOME 20 PHOTOGRAPHS WERE MADE DURING PLANT TOUR, HOPEFULLY NOT FOR UNTOWARD PUBLICITY.

3. INDIA IS STUDYING, ADMITTEDLY, THERMONUCLEAR EXPLOSION TECHNOLOGY. THEY SAID THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN FUNDING; IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME, FUSION EXPLOSIONS BEING MUCH CHEAPER PER UNIT WORK THAN FISSION EXPLOSIONS.

4. DURING A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIVE MERITS OF NATURAL
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AND ENRICHED URANIUM REACTORS, THE GENTLEMEN SEEMED TENSE

AND PERHAPS EMBARRASSED FOR THE ONLY TIME IN THE VISIT, WHEN THEY EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT CENTRIFUGE SEPARATION WOULD BE CHEAP ENOUGH FOR INDIA, LASER SEPARATION WAS FAR FROM ESTABLISHED, AND EVEN THE NATURAL URANIUM REACTORS WERE ONLY A STOP-GAP FOR INDIA UNTIL THORIUM BREDDERS ARE DELIVERED. SCIATT WOULD GUESS THAT THEY ACTUALLY ARE SERIOUSLY WORKING ON URANIUM ISOTOPE SEPARATION AND HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT.

5. THEY THINK EVEN IF A COUNTRY DOES ACCEPT SAFEGUARDS THAT SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF FISSIONABLE MATERIAL CAN BE DIVERTED FAIRLY READILY.

6. THEY STATED THAT THE CANADIAN EMBARGO IS CAUSING DELAYS IN RAPP-II, BUT THE MADRAS REACTORS, WITH MORE LEAD TIME, ARE NOT APPRECIABLY AFFECTED.

7. THE ABOVE-RECORDED IMPRESSIONS RAISE MORE QUESTIONS THAN THEY ANSWER, BUT CONSTITUTE A SMALL SUBSTANTIVE RESUMPTION OF THE DIALOGUE WITH BARC TECHNOLOGISTS. POLITICAL MATTERS WERE NOT RAISED; ATMOSPHERE WAS FRIENDLY AND APPARENTLY OPEN, BUT AT NO TIME WERE FEWER THAN TWO BARC EXECUTIVES PRESENT. (BARC DIRECTOR RAMANNA WAS OUT OF TOWN.)
SCHNEIDER

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